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AUTHOR Grealy, Joseph I.
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INSTITUTION Institute for Safe Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
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ABSTRACT

This report indicates that while school security systems should be tailored to the school system's specific needs and problems, most must take cognizance of the following concerns: (1) evaluation of current security arrangements; (2) degree of dependence upon local law enforcement bodies; (3) management of the school system; (4) analysis of school security problems; and (5) the recruitment, training, and responsibility of school security staff. Any effective school security program, it is stated, must address not only the traditional issues of law enforcement and crime analysis but also community relations and risk management. The report also analyzes the specific distribution of authority in a Florida school security system and delineates the roles of security specialist, investigator, and security patrolman. (Author/WP)

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School Security Program

Joseph I. Grealy

Institute for Safe Schools
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School Security Program

At one time, school security was largely limited to the protection of school facilities and equipment after hours. However, crime incidents and threats that once were regarded as unfortunate, but tolerable facts of life for teachers and students, have become a source of growing concern both during and after school hours. It has become imperative for many school districts experiencing serious crime problems to organize a security program that will prevent crime against people, facilities and equipment. A security program also can serve as a preventive measure for those school systems not yet experiencing a large amount of crime.

The problems confronting school systems today - in terms of crime, fear, delinquency and disruption - dictate a broad perspective on school security programs. In the broad sense, such a program may embrace a number of components and participants, including the school system's security organization, administrators, staff, students, parents, neighborhood residents, local law enforcement agencies and local youth oriented agencies. Thus, in Broward County - and hopefully in school systems throughout the nation - school security is recognized as a school-system-wide, indeed a communitywide problem.

Like any large institution, a school system has a complex range of jurisdictions and charters among its offices and organizations. To enhance the utility of these guidelines for administrators sensitive to jurisdictional considerations, this documentation focuses on, and organizes the material around, a narrower definition of a school security program.

As applied in these guidelines for Broward County, the **school security program** is limited to those resources and activities under the direct or indirect control of the Broward County School System's security department - the Department of Internal Affairs. An example of a directly controlled resource is the investigator who works out of Internal Affairs and is assigned to

investigate serious incidents at all schools within a designated area. The investigator is selected, trained, assigned and supervised by the security director. An example of an indirectly controlled resource is the security specialist, who is selected, trained and assigned to a school by Internal Affairs, but who reports administratively to the principal. This jurisdictional focus is of major importance to administrators concerned with planning and developing a security program in their particular school systems.

A successful school security program must not only have the cooperation of students, teachers, administrators and the School Board, but it should be part of a comprehensive community effort. The successful Broward County program also includes preventive measures, such as the CPTED strategies developed in the LEAA school demonstration (outlined in the previous chapter). The model described here is based on Broward County's program. However, the model also has been developed on the basis of familiarity with the school crime experience of other school systems - both those with their own programs and those without an established program. The suggestions highlight the fundamental considerations in organizing and evaluating a school security program, based on the Broward County experience. Thus, no claim is made that they are exhaustive.

A school security program should be tailored to the school system's specific problems; therefore, the size and extent of the program will vary. The first step in setting up the Broward County program was to assess the needs of the school system as a whole, together with those of the individual schools. Through an analysis of existing data, together with victimization and attitudinal surveys of students and teachers, the prevalent crime and fear problems and locations were determined to help establish the program's priorities (i.e., whether the program would focus on property protection or people protection, or both). School administrators then assessed the problems in terms of strengths and weaknesses of existing efforts, as well as the physical plants, educational policies and adminstrative procedures. Important considerations included the following:

Current security arrangements and policies, including an evaluation of those currently responsible for overall security.

Degree of dependence upon local law enforcement agencies (town, city, county or state) and other public safety agencies (such as fire department).

Current personnel policies relating to recruitment, selection, promotion and organization of school security staff.

Management of the school system, including an analysis of past and projected growth of the system.

Analysis of the current school security problem for which the security organization would be held accountable. This not only included a current assessment of the problem, but also addressed problems of school security evidenced over previous years (i.e., increase/decrease in selected types of incidents).

Type of training and job performance to be expected of school security employees. (If a watchman style of security were preferred, private security organizations could fulfill this need; otherwise, a permanent school security staff would be employed, augmented by private security patrols and/or local law enforcement resources).

Other contributions that could be made by a school security staff that would not generally be within their operational or administrative purview (e.g., recommendations

based on internal personnel problems investigations and recommendations for costly alarm systems).

A comprehensive school security program must address a broad range of issues, the responsibility for which may overlap among personnel of various departments. The major responsibilities of security personnel relate to the issues of law enforcement, crime analysis and crime prevention. However, as in Broward County, security personnel also may be asked to aid or coordinate efforts in community relations and risk management (e.g., inventory control and property identification to minimize threats to school property; fire and accident prevention to meet inspection and insurance qualifications; and restitution processing to deal with offender work programs, insurance benefits, and so forth).

With respect to law enforcement, the basic requirement is that security personnel be familiar with school policies and criminal law as they relate to threats to school personnel (students, staff and visitors) and to school property (facilities, equipment and grounds). The actual operations include security policy enforcement, patrol coordination and activities coordination (supporting school functions such as field trips and sports events).

The function of crime analysis includes setting up and monitoring procedures for reporting and investigating incidents, writing reports, keeping records, analyzing data and providing feedback to the appropriate personnel. Information that reflects on crime opportunities and barriers provided by the school design and plant layout is a major consideration.

School security personnel share responsibility for a number of functions related directly to crime prevention. They coordinate the development and utilization of security hardware systems, which includes alarms, lighting, locks and keys, and actual physical barriers. In addition, security personnel input to planners and architects are critical to selecting and monitoring crime prevention

strategies for the effective design and use of the school buildings and grounds.

The organization of a school security program is dictated by the size of the school district and by the amount of serious crime it experiences. It can consist of one person or several, but the objectives are to ensure an orderly learning environment and to protect the facilities and equipment. Smaller school systems may require only nonschool hours' protection, but the larger systems require coverage during and after school hours.

In Broward County, as is generally the case in larger school districts, most crime incidents take place in individual schools where the principal is the responsible administrator. The incidents are investigated by security personnel who receive their guidance and direction from the security director. The director selects, trains, assigns and supervises security employees. However, once assigned to a school, the security specialist becomes an integral part of the school staff and is responsible to the principal.

All incidents at a school are investigated by the security specialist and the results are furnished to the principal for a decision regarding possible administrative action. A report on the incident is forwarded to the security director for information, statistical compilation and possible assignment to an investigator for further action. Serious incidents immediately are brought to the attention of the principal and the security director, who, in turn, inform the superintendent and the area superintendent. Incidents of a criminal nature are brought to the attention of the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Area investigators handle incidents at schools within the area to which they are assigned. They report administratively to the security director and maintain close working relationships with their area superintendents.

All reports by security specialists and investigators are reviewed for possible further action by the security director. When reported incidents are of concern to other departments (such as Risk Management, Safety and Transportation), copies of the reports are forwarded to the appropriate department heads.

In Broward County, security specialists and investigators normally are assigned only during school hours. An effective alarm system and local law enforcement personnel protect school facilities and equipment during non-school hours. Privately employed security guards patrol such areas as county administrative offices and school bus depots.

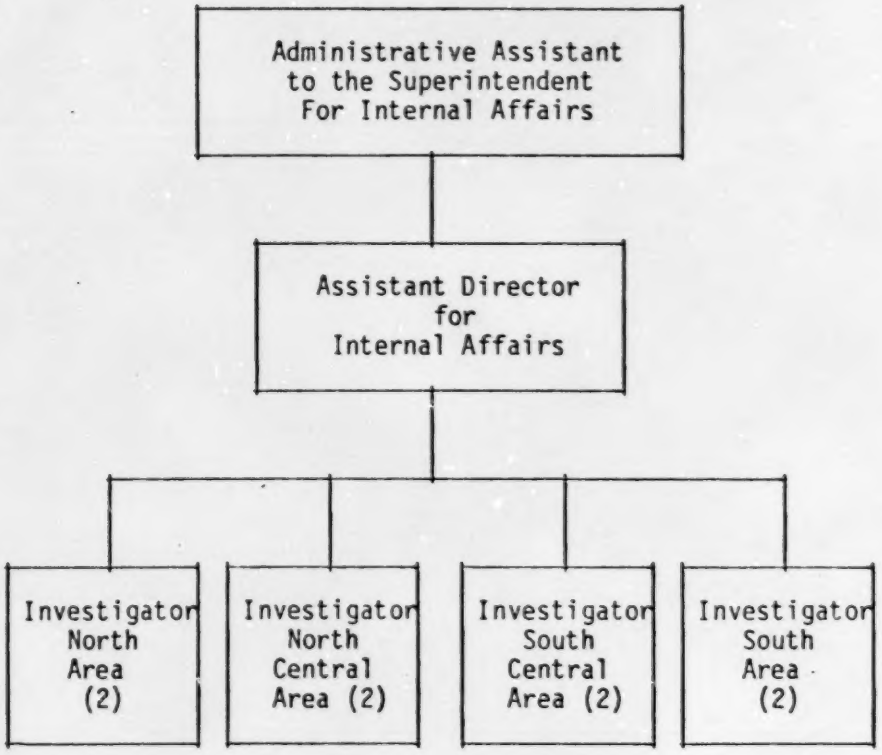
The number and types of security personnel required to staff the security program depend on the coverage desired by the school system. Broward County employs levels of personnel ranging from the security director who deals at an executive level with the school system and the community, to the patrolman who guards school facilities after hours.

The position of director is critical to the success of a school security program. In some school systems, the director may be the only staff assigned to the program, while in others, he may supervise the activities of a large number of subordinates in a wide range of assignments. Regardless of the scope of his responsibilities and the size of his staff, the security director must be able to design a workable school security program that protects the interests of the school system, its employees and students, and its relationship with the community.

The security director must be capable of selecting and training security personnel at all levels, supervising their investigations, developing and assessing procedures, analyzing statistical data and preparing meaningful reports based on such data, advising school officials on preventive measures and ensuring close and harmonious working relationships with area law enforcement agencies. In Broward County the security director receives overall guidance and

policy direction from the superintendent. The organization chart below shows the reporting structure within the Department of Internal Affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS


Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent For Internal Affairs
Assistant Director for Internal Affairs
Investigator North Area (2)
Investigator North Central Area (2)
Investigator South Central Area (2)
Investigator South Area (2)

Security Specialist

Instead of having off-duty police officers perform security functions at individual schools within a system, it is more effective and efficient to have a regular full-time security specialist available who can handle all matters pertaining to security and safety at the school. In Broward County he is trained within the parent school system and then stationed at a single school. The training includes the human relations considerations in fulfilling his responsibilities. The security specialist becomes an integral part of his assigned school's staff. His function has line responsibility to the school official (principal) and staff responsibility to the security director.

It is the security specialist's responsibility to work with school officials in drawing up programs to cope with particular problem areas. He helps in the development and monitoring of preventive programs involving school officials, students, police and other concerned people in the community to protect the students, school personnel, facilities and equipment. As part of this responsibility, the security specialist advises school officials on the handling of social and athletic events to minimize potential problems. In the absence of an investigator, the security specialist undertakes the investigations of incidents.

Investigator

In Broward County, investigators handle all matters pertaining to security, safety and human relations in those schools where security specialists are not stationed. In addition, they investigate serious cases in all schools. The main function of the investigator is to determine the facts in each incident. These facts then are made available to the principal. If the incident involves an instructional or administrative employee, the facts also are furnished to the personnel director. If an investigation involves a criminal matter, it is brought to the attention of the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. The school system has worked with local law

enforcement agencies to develop mutually acceptable referral procedures.

In all incidents involving students, the parents immediately are advised and a parent-teacher-student conference is held as quickly as possible. The investigator attends as an impartial party. The investigator is responsible for establishing liaison not only with school officials and staff, but also with local law enforcement personnel.

Security Patrolman

The primary function of a security patrolman is to protect designated school areas during nonschool hours by apprehending or deterring offenders. In Broward County, security patrolmen may be assigned to one or more schools on a regular basis, or they may be hired only when a particular facility has been experiencing repeated problems. Schools also may employ a security patrolman during school hours for special functions (e.g., athletic events), or if a school has experienced disruptions. A security patrolman may be used to respond to alarms signalling an intrusion after school hours. He submits reports on problems and potential problem areas to the security director and principal and notifies them of any deficiencies in the security system.

The security patrolman may be employed under several different circumstances. He may be hired on a fulltime basis by the individual school or school system, rented from a private security firm, or hired for parttime duty (e.g., off-duty services of a local police officer). Some federal funds may be available for hiring security patrol personnel, particularly in those schools where the courts have ordered busing for integration purposes. Under some circumstances, funds also are available to hire such personnel under the U. S. Department of Labor's Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) program of providing work for the unemployed. These individuals may require special training prior to employment.

The administrative functions of a school security program include at least the following concerns: staff compensation; staff equipment; communications; and training.

Compensation for guard and watchman personnel usually is paid on an hourly basis for actual hours worked, rather than the traditional academic system of paying a flat salary for a ten month year. Schools with year-round activities or programs may employ some security personnel on a twelve month basis, particularly if summer school, various community activities and administrative functions keep the buildings open throughout much of the summer.

Consideration in equipping school security personnel includes transportation, communications, dress (whether uniformed) and weapons. Different circumstances and needs will affect the decisions concerning each of these elements within a school or school system.

In Broward County, the security director, senior investigator and all investigators are certified by the Florida Police Standards Council. They possess powers of arrest in school related crimes through deputization by the sheriff of Broward County. They are not uniformed, nor are they armed. When travelling on school business, they use personally owned automobiles for which they are reimbursed by the school system. They are equipped with two-way radios and the base station is located in the Office of Internal Affairs.

Since they are assigned to designated high schools, security specialists normally do not require transportation. As staff members, they are not uniformed, nor do they carry arms. Although they have law enforcement backgrounds, they do not have arrest powers.

The Office of Internal Affairs operates a communications system employing its own assigned frequency to maintain radio contact with all administrative and investigative personnel. Their automobiles have portable

transceivers installed that can be removed and operated in hand units. The Maintenance and Transportation Departments of the Broward County School System have their own assigned frequencies for operating two-way radio systems which are monitored by security personnel to ensure prompt response to an emergency situation.

Since all Broward County School System personnel above the level of security patrolman have law enforcement background, they already have completed police academy training, which includes security and safety. Additional training includes human relations and School Board policy indoctrination.

If my writings have created the impression that all is lost with regard to our young people today, that is not my intention. We have the greastest collection of intelligent youngsters in the world. However, our young people are being subjected to very serious criminal involvements through peer pressures, school and family failures, as evidenced by the spiraling rate of juvenile delinquency.

Hopefully some of these solutions can be adapted to your school district through a cooperative community commitment so that teachers and students can experience quality education in an environment free from crime and the fear of crime.